

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
UNION BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION.

WHEREAS, in all populous communities, and especially in large cities, the evils of pauperism are found to press heavily, both on the poor, by privation, and on the rich by taxation: and since experience shows that the comfort and well being of every individual in society are liable to interruption by the disorderly conduct and crimes which too often accompany poverty; and whereas, it is a duty admitted to be binding upon all persons, to aid in alleviating, and still more, in preventing the misfortunes and sufferings of their fellow citizens, we, the undersigned, after due deliberation on the subject, do hereby agree to the following constitution, as the means by which actual distress will be best mitigated and removed, pauperism and its concomitant ills prevented, and employment and instruction provided for the indigent and needy, compatibly with justice to all classes, and the best interests of the commonwealth.

ARTICLE I.

This Society shall be called "THE UNION BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION."

ARTICLE II.

Every citizen of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania who shall subscribe to this constitution, and pay into the hands of the Treasurer the sum of ten dollars, shall be a member for life; and every such citizen who shall subscribe to this constitution, and pay annually into the hands of the Treasurer the sum of two dollars, shall be a member while he contributes.

ARTICLE III.

The officers of the Association shall be a President, two Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, and twenty Managers, who jointly shall constitute an Executive Board, seven of whom shall form a quorum.

ARTICLE IV.

The President, or in case of his absence, the senior Vice President present, shall preside at the meetings of the Association and Executive Board, and subscribe their official acts. In case of the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, a President pro tempore, shall be appointed annually.

ARTICLE V.

The Association shall meet annually on the Third Tuesday in October in each year, fifteen forming a quorum. And the Executive Board shall meet at least once in each month.

ARTICLE VI.

The President, or in case of his absence, one of the Vice Presidents, shall, at the request in writing of ten members, call special meetings of the Association.

ARTICLE VII.

The Executive Board shall, at the annual meeting of the Association, lay before it a full report of its affairs, and of the proceedings of the Board for the last year, and communicate such other information as may be considered useful.

ARTICLE VIII.

The Board shall have full authority to confer and correspond with the Ladies' Society and committees ; to divide the city and county into districts ; to appoint an agent or agents with such salaries as may be necessary, and to take such other measures as they may deem expedient to carry the objects of the Association into effect ; and shall have power to fill all vacancies which may occur in the Board.

ARTICLE IX.

The Treasurer shall report monthly to the Board, and shall, at the annual meeting of the Association, lay before it a full statement of his accounts, and of the funds of the Association ; and shall pay all orders drawn by the President under the direction of the Association or Board.

ARTICLE X.

The Recording Secretary shall keep fair minutes of the proceedings of the Association, and of the Board ; shall attest their official acts, and give notice of their meetings. In case of his absence, a secretary pro tempore shall be appointed.

ARTICLE XI.

The correspondence of the Association and of the Board, shall be under the charge of the Corresponding Secretary.

ARTICLE XII.

The members shall, at the annual meeting, elect by ballot the officers and managers of the Association to serve for one year, and until a new Board shall be elected. Provided, however, that no person shall be allowed to vote who has not been a member of the Association at least three months prior to the election.

ARTICLE XIII.

The Recording Secretary shall give at least three day's notice, in the newspapers, of the time and place of the election, and of the meetings of the Association.

ARTICLE XIV.

The managers may make any rules, regulations, or by-laws that they may think proper, not inconsistent with this Constitution.

ARTICLE XV.

The clear yearly value or income of the messuages, houses, land and tenements, rents, annuities, or other hereditaments and real estate of the said corporation, and the interest of money to be lent by them, shall not exceed the sum of Five Hundred Pounds.

B Y - L A W S .

ARTICLE I.

The Stated Meetings of the Executive Board shall be held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, and five members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE II.

Special Meetings may be called by the President, or in his absence, by either of the Vice Presidents, at the written request of five members of the Board.

ARTICLE III.

The order of business shall be as follows:

1. The calling of the roll.
2. Reading of the minutes.
3. Report of Agent.
4. Report of Treasurer.
5. Reports of Standing Committees.
6. Report of Select Committees.
7. Deferred Business.
8. New Business.
9. Elections.

ARTICLE IV.

The following Standing Committees shall be chosen by ballot at the first meeting of the Board after the annual election :

1. A Committee on Publication to consist of two members.
2. A Committee of Conference to consist of two members.
3. A Committee of Finance to consist of five members.
4. A Committee on Office and work, to consist of five members.
5. A Committee on Fuel and Stoves, to consist of five members.

ARTICLE V.

Select committees shall be appointed by a presiding officer. All committees shall report in writing, and all reports shall be signed by the chairman, or by such person as the committee shall direct.

ARTICLE VI.

It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to notify all committees, through their chairman, of their appointment and its objects.

ARTICLE VII.

The Board shall elect by ballot suitable persons to fill vacancies which may occur in their body. A majority of the members present shall be necessary for a choice.

ARTICLE VIII.

All resolutions shall be offered in writing, and signed by the mover, if requested by any member.

ARTICLE IX.

All accounts shall be examined by the Committee of Finance before the meeting, at which they are presented to the Board.

INSTRUCTIONS TO VISITORS.

With a view to promote a uniformity of action consistent with the original design and present responsible duties of this Association, the following instructions to Visitors are respectfully submitted by the Ladies' Board of Managers, convened 1st Month, 2d, 1842.

ARTICLE I.

You will confine yourselves exclusively to the particular Section appointed you, visiting the families thereof once in two weeks, (if practicable,) and as much oftener as circumstances may seem to require, with the view of promoting their improvement—a report of which should be rendered, in writing, once a month, at the District meeting to which you belong. In case of inability to perform your regular duties, call in the aid of the District Committee.

ARTICLE II.

Endeavour to ascertain the number of families requiring aid, and the individuals composing them ; their means of subsistence, the amount of rent paid, the period of their residence in the District ; the ages of their children, and whether they attend school ; making it your primary object to secure their confidence, by conducting yourselves towards them in such a manner as to prove that you are actuated by motives of benevolence, and have their welfare in view.

ARTICLE III.

You will be particular to encourage habits of industry and cleanliness, both of houses and persons, amongst the poor. Endeavor to make them sensible of the absolute importance of employment, and aid them in obtaining it. Cherish a spirit of independence, pointing out to them the advantage of Fuel Saving Funds and other beneficial institutions, encouraging weekly depositories for rent and other purposes.

ARTICLE IV.

It is needful to bear in mind the prevalence of imposture, and it is to be hoped that the frequency of your visits will greatly facilitate its detection. Whilst, therefore, avoiding every appearance of harshness, or want of feeling for the misery which attracts your notice, use every precaution to guard against the misapplication of charitable aid, to objects of pretended distress, or to those who may be receiving adequate relief from other sources.

ARTICLE V.

In case of the removal of a family into your Section who may solicit aid, it is recommended that you should call upon the Visitor in whose Section they have formerly resided, for information respecting them : but in no case communicate to them the names of individuals who may have informed you respecting their habits, circumstances, &c.

ARTICLE VI.

Where you meet with sickness and want, you will inquire, whether there is any medical or other attendance; whether relief is afforded by any Religious or Charitable Society, and what assistance is needed. Provide yourself with information respecting the nearest Dispensary, and when practicable, draw upon existing charitable societies for their aid—a list of which may be procured at the office of this Association. Where it can be done with equal advantage, provide the articles needed, in preference to giving money; and be careful to render an account of all expenditures to your Secretary; no Visitor neglecting this duty, being entitled to draw upon the funds of the Association.

ARTICLE VII.

Be particularly attentive to the infirm and aged. Sympathise with the widow, and have compassion on the fatherless, endeavoring to promote the general good, by pointing out the advantages of education, the duty of religiously observing the Sabbath-day—the importance of attending a place of worship, and the value of the sacred Scriptures.

ARTICLE VIII.

It is generally desirable that Visitors go two together in their Sections, especially amongst families not heretofore under care. In cases of any difficulty, consult the judgment of an experienced Visitor, thus avoiding the censure of the public, and the reproaches of the undeserving poor.

ARTICLE IX.

Use every exertion in your power to advance the cause of Temperance, by imparting judicious advice, and the circulation of tracts and other useful publications on the subject.

ARTICLE X.

No Visitor is authorized to make public collections on behalf of the Association, though at all times privileged to solicit from private charity contributions for interesting cases under care.

ARTICLE XI.

Neglect not your Sections in the summer season, but visit them as faithfully as in the winter, urging the necessity of deposits for fuel, rent, &c., thereby making yourselves better acquainted with the habits and occupation of those under your immediate notice.

ARTICLE XII.

Provide yourself with a blank Schedule, which you will fill up, and accompany with a notice of any particular circumstance tending to illustrate character, evince improvement, or call for particular advice; with such observations on the state of your Sections as may be useful. Record the names of those you visit, and the relief afforded them. Upon your resignation, hand it over to the Visitor who may succeed you, with such remarks as may be considered necessary.

LIMITS OF THE DISTRICTS.

CITY.

							District
Vine to Market,	Delaware to Sixth street,	-	-	-	-	-	1
Market to Spruce,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	2
Spruce to South,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	3
Vine to Market,	Sixth to Twelfth street,	-	-	-	-	-	4
Market to Spruce,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	5
Spruce to South,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	6
Vine to Market,	Twelfth to Schyl. Sixth street,	-	-	-	-	-	7
Market to Spruce,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	8
Spruce to South,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	9
Vine to Market,	Schuylkill Sixth to Schuylkill	-	-	-	-	-	10
Market to Spruce,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	11
Spruce to South,	do.	-	-	-	-	-	12

NORTHERN LIBERTIES.

Bounded by Vine, Sixth, Cohocksink creek, and river Delaware.

SPRING GARDEN.

Bounded by Vine, Poplar, Delaware Sixth street, and river Schuylkill.

SOUTHWARK.

Bounded by South street, Delaware river, and Passyunk road.

MOYAMENSING.

Bounded by South street, Passyunk road, and river Schuylkill.